

Banks are still sitting on \$1 trillion in cash. By using 7 percent of that money, there would be millions of people kept out of poverty. The banks can afford it and it would be something we seem to have lost all sight of in Congress—it would be fair. We can restart the economy by helping homeowners. We can come out of this economic crisis by putting responsible homeowners on solid ground. The map says it all. Homeowners are struggling in every district of every Member of this Congress.

We can fix this foreclosure disaster. We can help American families who play by the rules. We could start action today and help the middle class. But, no, what are we going to do? We are going to fool around out here about the rules of the EPA that protect people against toxins and mercury.

This Congress has lost its way and it needs a change. And it's going to come, because all those people who are in foreclosure in this country when the next election comes are going to ask, "What did the Republicans in the House do?" And the answer is, "Nothing."

EPA'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMPEO. Madam Speaker, I came to Washington, D.C., 9 months ago with the hope that we would restore a little bit of common sense and a whole lot of spending control to Washington, D.C. I also came to Washington, D.C., having never heard of an eco-ambassador. Now I had heard of ambassadors and I am familiar with the environment, but I had never heard of an eco-ambassador.

Indeed, I had never heard of an eco-ambassador until just a few short weeks ago when our Environmental Protection Agency that has done so much damage to our economy, so much damage to our Kansas' Fourth Congressional District, our farmers, our manufacturers, and our families, our Environmental Protection Agency decided at this time of massive Federal deficits that we needed a new program to create eco-ambassadors—eco-ambassadors, each of which will be given \$6,000 of your money, eco-ambassadors which, in exchange for that money, will come to Washington, D.C., and go back to their home places and work for 20 weeks—20 weeks for \$6,000—part-time at that—for their internship program.

When you read the requirements to be eligible to receive an eco-ambassador internship position, you will be fascinated to see that it is an ideologically driven program. Students who apply must have a strong interest in environmental justice, social justice issues, and other issues relating to environmental health disparities in health, volunteer, or employment settings. This is a liberals-only policy.

□ 1020

The Environmental Justice internship is of course administered with your taxpayer dollars. We don't need a program like this at any time; we certainly don't need it at this time.

So I have offered a bill, H.R. 2876, the EPA Student Nondiscrimination Act. It simply says that when you apply for employment with the Federal Government, we're not going to seek to find out whether you agree with this administration's radical environmental agenda. We're not going to seek to find out if you have worked as a community organizer. All we're going to ask is that you are qualified for the position.

Now, there are many efforts and many concerns about environmental disparities across the country. I share those concerns, but our EPA and our Justice Department already have many remedies for folks who feel like they have been discriminated against. What we don't need is yet another Federal program aimed at trying to solve a problem that we know can't be solved in Washington, D.C.

I'll close with this thought: this is a small program. The total dollars expended in the scale of our massive Federal deficit are very, very small; but it is symptomatic of a place, Washington, D.C., that has become completely disconnected from America and common-sense values, the values that we all have in Kansas. We don't need eco-ambassadors. We don't need this program. And I would ask my colleagues to support my legislation to eliminate it.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. It's not too late. That's my message to Palestinian Authority President Abbas, who has announced his intention to seek unilateral Palestinian statehood at the United Nations this Friday. It's not too late to abandon this reckless route, engage in direct negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, and choose the path to peace.

There is only one road to a peace agreement, and that is through direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians. This course forward is clearly outlined in the Oslo Peace Agreement, which states that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be resolved through direct, two-party negotiations. Anything outside of these direct talks—particularly this Palestinian appeal for U.N. recognition—is a dangerous digression from the known way forward.

In addition to veering from the track toward two states, a status upgrade at this time could allow the Palestinians to pursue cases against Israel in international institutions such as the International Criminal Court. Such institutions could even be used to request advisory rulings on final status issues,

further circumventing two-party negotiations.

The U.S. has also made significant investments in bolstering Palestinian security and economic prosperity, all in an effort to enable the Palestinians to make the difficult concessions necessary to move toward peace. This appeal to the U.N. and rejection of direct two-party talks directly undermines considerable American efforts and investments in a peace deal. Abbas and the Palestinians need to come back to the negotiating table, and it is the U.S. that needs to lead them back and spearhead negotiations.

As a true and steadfast friend to Israel, there has never been a more vital time for America to stand strong with our ally. With the excitement and hope of the Arab Spring has also come a great deal of uncertainty—uncertainty about the strength of the relationship between Israel and Turkey; uncertainty about the willingness of the Egyptians to hold true to their promises under the benchmark 1979 peace treaty; uncertainty about the security of the Sinai; uncertainty surrounding the speed with which Iran marches toward a nuclear bomb; and uncertainty about the number of rockets being stockpiled by Hezbollah and Hamas aimed at the homes of Israeli citizens.

But there is one thing that must never be uncertain: America's support for Israel. A threat to Israel's security or legitimacy is a threat to America, and we will not stand by and let Israel face these challenges alone. Upon her founding over six decades ago, the United States was the first Nation to recognize Israel. And since that recognition, the special bond between Israel and the U.S. has only grown stronger on the bedrock of the mutual principles of freedom, justice, and peace. Now is the time to stand with our old friend and lead the way to peace.

It is moments like these that test our mettle. It is moments like these that are recorded in our history books. And it is moments like these where we must show our leadership.

America must do everything in its power to end this perilous Palestinian bid for unilateral statehood and get direct negotiations between the two parties back on track. And President Abbas must know there will be consequences for choosing the path of confrontation over that of negotiation.

The course to unilateral recognition is not free. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is at a pivotal crossroad. The Palestinians can choose to pursue the dead-end track toward U.N. recognition, or they can adjust their course in their wrongheaded U.N. bid and sit down at the negotiating table with Israel. The choice is theirs. It's not too late to choose the path toward peace.